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THE VYĀLA FIGURES ON THE MEDIAEVAL TEMPLES OF INDIA

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Prof. Dr Agrawala has been guiding inspiration behind this small work. It is also a matter of gratification that the work is graced by his learned Foreword. Thanks, indeed, to Prof. Agrawala that this work is published

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TO

THE KNOWN AND UNKNOWN AUTHORS

OF

THE VĀSTUŚĀSTRAS OF INDIA AND CEYLON



Leogryph with rider. Chaukhandi, near Sarnath. Gupta, 5th Century A.D.

FOREWORD

Shri *M.A. Dhaky* has presented an intensive study of the Vyāla figures in Mediaeval temples of India. It is an original point of view surveying a wide range of material of what maybe termed as the "Grotesque in Indian Art." Introducing the subject he has covered a wide range of the origin and distribution of the conception of *vyāla* in the art of India and the adjacent countries. His research is delightful, informative and precise. I had suggested to him to investigate the sixteen kinds of *vyālas* in a passage of the *Aparājitaprichchhā* with facial alterations and again multiplied by sixteen owing to difference in their poses, thus offering a repertoire of 256 figures. Shri Dhaky dived into the subject with his characteristic zeal, thoroughness and scientific accuracy, and the result maybe seen in the present monograph.

The material about the *vyāla* in Indian art is enormous and is worthy of a full thesis. In short Shri Dhaky's point of view is that the *vyāla* was an imported conception which luxuriated in the extreme in Indian climate. To this we need draw attention to a few points since we feel sure that this probing by the author may initiate further research in this topic.

The question arises as to what is a *vyāla* and what is the antiquity and nature of the evidence about it As we understand it the *vyāla* is based on deformity of the normal human and animal form. In its widest sense *vyāla* signifies the "Grotesque" which is often called *vikaṭa* in literature. It is made synonymous with *gaṇa*, *pramatha*, *bhūta*, *yaksha*, *rākshasa* in the Purāṇas. It has been described as *Rudra-srishṭi*, creation of Rudra Now, Rudra-Śiva best energises as *Naṭarāja* a conception going back to Nṛitu of the *Ṛigveda* said for India. Dance implies adhering to a *brahmasūtra* or plumb-line, wherever the vertical line of the dance wavers misshapen creation is the result. Normal *prāṇic* vibration is beautiful, and departure from it misshapen. The material body may-be either according to the normal mould or expressive of countless deformities whether the physical form is human or animal. Indeed, from the creational point of view even men form part of the same divine scheme of birth and growth as the animals. In the *Ṛigveda* itself it is said that in the sacrifice the gods secured to the stake the life principle as Man-Animal (*abadhnan purushaṁ paśum*). A few typical forms conveying this idea were evolved, e g. Gaṇapati (elephant's head joined to human body), Hayagrīva (horse head), Hanūmān or Vṛishākapi (monkey head), Nṛisiṁha (man-lion), Nṛi-Varāha (boarheaded Man). This aspect of man-

animal forms was greatly expanded. The Purāṇic writers have elaborated this aspect to their heart's content, e. g. Gajānana, Hayānana, Siṁhānana, Vyāghrānana, Mṛigendravadana, Kharamukha, Makarānana, Āśīvishānana, Īhāmṛigamukha, Varāhasadṛiśānana (Boar headed), Haṁsavaktra, Kukkuṭavaktra, Kākamukha, Gridhramukha Indeed, a hundred such names maybe read in the Purānic lists. Some of which are as follows :—

(a) Matsya Purāna, 154 524-545 ; 163.1-4

(b) Liṅga Purāṇa, I, 103 13-34

(c) Harivaṁśa Purāṇa, II 124.19-25 ; II. 109.63-84 ; III. 32.7-10 ; III. 45.1-4.

(d) Vāyu Purāna, 101.260-264.

(e) Brahma Purāna, 213 93-99.

(f) Vāmana Purāṇa, 20 17-19 , 57.60-104 ; 67.5 ff And many others

It appears that these references were not the outcome of the imagination of the Purāṇic authors but were parts of widespread beliefs amongst the people. For instance, the *Vālmīki Rāmāyana* gives two lists one of fifty deformed shapes and the other of about eighty exclusively female deformities The *Liṅga Purāṇa* states that *Gana Sṛishṭi* is not normally processed through the mother's womb but it comes out from the pores in the body of Brahmā (*romaja srishṭi*) which implies that the *prāṇic* force breaks through the ordained restraints and behaves erratically As such it was truly regarded as the outcome of a break in the rhythm of Śiva's dance It is, therefore, conceived that all naughtyness becomes manifest amongst the *gaṇas* of Śiva and they are enchained to the pillars in Śiva temples The Gaṇas are given many expressive epithets as *arūpa*, *virūpa*, *mahākāya*, *ghaṭodara* (pot-bellied), *chipiṭānana* (squat-faced), *vikaṭa* (grotesque), *vāmana*, (dwarf), *dānava*, *bhūta*, *utkaṭa* (gigantic), *bhīma* (dreadful), *karāla*, *niśāchara*

It is said that when Rudra as Bhairava disrupted the sacrifice of Daksha he was followed by his Gaṇas of terrific form

These creatures of fancy followed two types, human and animal Both undoubtedly originated in the Vedic age , ten-headed Brāhmaṇa (*daśaśīrsha daśāsya*, AV.), ten-headed calf, two-headed eagle (*ubhayataḥśīrshnī suparṇī*, ŚB 3. 2 4. 16).

The greatest Vyāla of Indian conception (RV. 4.58 3) is the fourhorned bull, with two heads, three feet, seven hands, secured by a triple band He is the Great God himself and the Yajña in each individual modelled after him is a similar *vyāla* which is also explained as Agni or the life force in each living

centre. A similar fourhorned bison (*chatuhśriṅga gaura*) is also conceived (RV. 4.58.2). The term Īhāmṛiga was being generally used from olden times for fabulous animals (*Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa*, Sundara. 9. 13; 18.8; *Rāyapaseṇiya Sutta*; *Samarāṅgaṇa Sūtradhāra*, 18. 6); but from the Gupta period onwards the term ***vyāla*** came into greater relief. It appears that the architects working in the different schools of Orissa, Khajuraho, Western India, Rajasthan and the Tamil land entered into a healthy rivalry in creating new forms of ***vyāla*** shapes placed in all positions, and of many instances. Their study is an attractive chapter of Indian sculpture and as such the Śilpa texts have taken due notice of their varied existence.

—V. S. AGRAWALA
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THE VYĀLA FIGURES
ON
THE MEDIÆVAL TEMPLES OF INDIA

The decorative repertoire of the Mediæval Indian temples is rich, imaginative, and varied. Its figural motifs are pleasing, meaningful, and reveal a taste that is superb and exhilarating. By and large, they come from sources that are diverse, alien alongside indigenous, and remote in time and place. There are, for instance, those dwarf frolicsome genii, goblins, gnomes (*gaṇas*, *pramathas*, *bhūtas*) and the weight-uplifting *kumāras* and *bhāraputrakas* whose predecessors are to be sought through the Gupta, Kshatrapa-Kushāna and Āndhra-Śuṅga instances to the amorini and atlantan figures of the Greeko-Roman world. The celestial minstrels (*gandharvas*, *vidyādharas*) are partly Indian and partly atavistic to Greek forebears in conception. The heavenly damsels (*apsarasas*, *surasundarīs*, *devāṅganās*) maybe the creation of Indian imagination though parallels in mermaids, nymphs may have had something to do with them. And there are those *kimpurushas* or *kinnaras* whose ultimate affiliations are traceable again to the Greek centaurs and West Asian cherubs, sphinxes and allied hypostatic beasts. Next of note are the *nāgas* (serpents) in half human form and the lovely *haṁsas* (ganders) often holding lotus stalks or pearl-strings in their beak : they are native to the soil of India Finally, there is that wellknown trio *gaja-makara-vyāla* where the first two the elephant and the sea monster belong to India. But the third member, whatever its ontological interpretation could be, is for its physical basis again exotic originally. Its form is too obviously Achaemanian in inspiration[1] Its early entry into India goes, by common consent, as far back as the Mauryan Period.[2]

The *vyāla*, at times also known in *vāstu* texts as *varāla(-ka)*,[3] *virāla*[4] and *virālikā*[5] was favoured in the decoration devices of the Āndhra-Śuṅga and Kushāṇa-Kshatrapa Age as well[6] Its fresh impact from Scythian sources through the intermediary of Gandhāra is equally in evidence.[7] It also figures in the creations of Gupta Period[8] In post-Gupta epoch it transgressed the territorial limits of India : it sailed with the many art seeds from India to the fertile soils of Laṅkā and South-east Asia, especially Java[9] But its palmy days of popularity came with the dawning of Mediæval Period when its development attained phenomenal proportions, matched only by its ubiquity throughout the length and breadth of the subcontinent.

In the structural temples of Mediæval Period, *vyāla* appears in a variety of context which differs in a few aspects in Southern and Northern India. From the coping stones of the stūpas of later Āndhra and Ikshvāku Period the *vyāla* travelled to the west and reappeared in the basement of some of the earliest Karṇāṭa temples.[10] In fact in Karṇāṭa it persists in the *siṁhathara* of the temples of the Hoyasaḷa Period.[11] Possibly, under the Karnāṭa influence or more likely as a legacy from the monuments of Pallava Period, it figures also in the *adhishṭhāna* (socle) of the temples of Chola times. In the rock cut caves at Undavalli and Mogalrajpuram it is reported in the pillar-bases a feature adopted by the sculptors of the Pallava Period from the middle of 7th century in the rock-cut caves and monolithic shrines at Mahabalipuram and subsequently in the structural temples at Kanchi and elsewhere.[12] In temples of early Chola Period *vyāla* occupies such other positions as the abaci of the *pādastambhas* (exterior wall pilasters) as at Brahmapurīśvara temple (early 10th century) at Pullamangai [13] In the times of Pāṇḍyas who succeeded Cholas, more interest was evinced in adding *gopuras* to the ancient sanctuaries ; the instances of *vyāla* incidence in the erections of Pāndya Period are, therefore, rather infrequent In the edifices erected under the affluent Vijayanagara dynasty, however, the *vyālas* received the highest recognition, almost to the point of obsession, when they occupied not only the sur-capitals and bracket-struts of the pillars [14] they came down and appropriated the shafts of the peripheral pillars of the pavilions and subscribe in no small measure to the tropical phantasy of such celebrated examples as the Kalyānamandapa at Vijayanagara,[15] Vellore[16] and Viranchipuram.[17]

In the temples of North India, the story is slightly different though in no way less interesting The association of *vyālas* in the door-frames such as at Shamalaji (ca 7th century)[18] and Roda (ca late 8th century)[19] in North Gujarat in the *vyālaśākhā* or *siṁhaśākhā* and its subsequent continuum in the 9th, 10th and 12th century temples of Gujarat is now known to the savants of Indian architecture [20] At Alampur[21] *vyāla* appears on the wall-face (*kaṭi*) of some of the more ornate temples such as Viśva-Brahmā and Svarga-Brahmā (1st quarter of 8th century) of the Nāgara class So it does on the Vaitāla Devala (late 8th century)[22] and Mukteśvara temple (mid 10th century)[23] at Bhubaneshwar in Kaliṅga. But their more universal spots of occurrence throughout Northern India from early 10th century onward are the deep *salilāntaras* (recesses) of the shrine-wall and the wall of the Closed Hall.[24] With their full stature and entourage they hide in and haunt these semiobscure corners In Western India, with a few exceptions,[25] they are found in these positions in such temples as Śiva temple at Kotai (ca. 2nd quarter of 10th century) in Kutch,[26] Ambikā temple (961) at Jagat

and Sun temple (ca. mid 10th century) at Tusa in Mewad,[27] Muni Bāwā temple (ca. mid 10th century) near Than in Saurashtra,[28] Navalakhā Pārśvanātha temple (ca. 3rd quarter of 10th century) at Pali and Mahāvīra temple (954) at Ghanerav in Gorwad area of Rajasthan,[29] one of the minor shrines (late 10th century) in Sachiyā mātā ensemble of temples at Osia near Jodhpur,[30] Bhaḍeśvara temple (ca. 1000) at Anjar in Kutch,[31] in the fragments of the earlier shrine (late 10th century) at Nadol, as well as Kekind and Devakulikās (ca. 1000) of the Mahāvīra temple at Ghanerav By the beginning of 11th century, the figures of ascetics in various attitudes of austerities took their positions in the recesses apart from the *vyālas*.[32] In the next stage the *vyālas* are almost completely replaced by ascetics in Gujarat as well as Rajasthan. The *Aparājitaprichchhā* a *vāstu* text from Gujarat (of the 3rd quarter of 12th century) is completely ignorant about the articulation of *vyālas* in *jalāntara* recesses. It enjoins the depiction of the ascetics exclusively[33] In very large temples such as was the Kailāsa-Meru temple of Somanātha (1169), they reappear sparingly[34] as reminiscences : they are once more seen at the far-famed Dharaṇa vihāra (1440) and a contemporaneous temple of Pārśvanātha, both at Ranakpur.[35] Their last report as the faint and flickering echoes of the bygone conventions is heard from the Chaturmukha Sambhavanātha temple (1640) at Jamnagar in Saurashtra.[36]

In Central India, the facts conform to the one noticed in Western India with a difference that the ascetic-figures are not substituted for *vyālas* in all its provincial styles In Jejākabhukti province of the Chandellas, at Khajuraho, Lakshmana temple (954) the earliest in the decorated series,[37] Pārśvanātha temple (955),[38] Chitragupta[39] and Chaturbhuja temple (ca. early 11th century)[40] show *vyālas* in the *jalāntara* recesses of the *talajaṅghā* (lower register). In Viśvanātha temple (1001-2),[41] Devī Jagadambī (early 11th century)[42] and Ādinātha temple (late 11th century)[43] *vyālas* are stationed in the recesses of the *talajaṅghā* as well as the first *ūrdhvajaṅghā* (upper register) They loom large in both the registers of the Vāmana temple (ca. mid 11th century)[44] while in Kandariyā Mahādeva temple (mid 11th century)[45] all the three registers shelter them amid their vast assembly of images.

In the neighbouring Dāhala-deśa of the Kalchuri-Chedis or Haihayas, Śiva temple (early 10th century) at Nohta,[46] Śiva temple (late 10th century) at Marai, Virāṭeśvara temple (late 11th century)[47] at Sohagpur and Mārkaṇḍeśvara temple (late 11th century)[48] at Markandi are the few examples where *vyālas* figure in the *salilāntaras* of the *talajaṅghā*.

In the Gopagiri territory where the Kachchhapaghātas ruled, the Śiva temple (ca late 10th century)[49] at Kadwaha, Jain temple (ca 1000) at Jhalarapatan[50] and Kākanmadh temple (1001-10)[51] at Suhania are the most notable temples bearing the *vyāla* figures.

The 10th and early 11th century temples built under the ægis of the Paramāras of Mālava have been, unfortunately, lost for ever. Neither Udayeśvara temple (1059-80) at Udayapur nor the temples (late 11th century) at Un show *vyālas* in the recesses.

In Eastern India, only in the Kaliṅga style the *vyālas* are encountered in the recessed piers of the temples.[52] The earliest such examples are found in the *talajaṅghā* of Rājārāṇī temple (ca early 11th century),[53] Brahmeśvara (ca 1060),[54] Kedāreśvara (mid 11h century) and Liṅgarāja temple (ca. 3rd quarter of 11th century)[55] at Bhubaneshwar In the 12th century *vyālas* do not come to view so often in Orissa Their last and the most notable cognizances come from the Sun temple (mid 13th century) at Konarak,[56] Ananta Vāsudeva (1278) and Sārī Devala (late 13th century) at Bhubaneshwar, and a few newly discovered shrines of this late age in Puri District, Orissa.

These recesses apart, *vyālas* in rare cases occur in the *vedikā* (balustraded dado) of the *mandapas*, they are met with in such a position at Virāṭeśvara temple, Sohagpur,[57] Śrī Krishna temple (early 12th century) at Valam[58] in North Gujarat and a few other places At Khajuraho they stand beside the *Śālabhañjikās* above the capitals of the pillars of the Gūdhamandapa of Lakshmaṇa temple [59] They are likewise found on the pillars of the Toraṇa in front of the Hastiśālā (Elephant's Court) (1032) of Vimala Vasahī at Dilwara as well as the Toraṇa (early 12th century) at Vadnagar[60] in Gujarat, in the same province in the Baroda Gate and other two gates (ca 1225-30) at Dabhoi[61] they support the *madalas* (struts) of the *pratolī*

The *vylās*, now looking placidly complacent, now virile and vigilant, vicious, mischievous, even belligerent, betray their prowess with a reptile like agility. they gallop, prance, whirl, swirl in sharp but swift and most animate contortions, their protruding tongue and tusks, short cunning ears, bulging bellicose eyes, and fierce, terrifying demeanour class them among the bizarre, phantasmagorical creations of human imagination Strange it may sound, but the *vyālas*, alien though in origin, cling tenaciously to the walls of mediæval Indian temples even after a millennium and a half away in time from their known date in their native land This resilience notwithstanding, through a gradual transformation and integration, the *vyālas* came to assume forms that are more complex

and varied than the prototypes whether Achaemanian or Scythian. Those latter *vyālas*, despite imperial gusto and impelling virtuosity, are still under the shadow of late Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian mannerisms. The Indian *vyālas*, by Gupta Age, drifted decisively from some of the obligations of the original formulae; the wings were the first to be discarded. This deliverance from archaism opened a window to the easy infiltration of new ideas; it stimulated creations of novel forms. By the beginning of the Mediæval Period the genious of the Indian sculptor achieved what he was seeking for The borrowal, unmistakably alien, un-Indian, grew acclimatized and now became a cherished, beautiful, indissociable possession among the decoration treasures of the Indian temples And just as some of the vegetal creepers and the 'peopled scroll' of the Roman panoply were transmuted in the hands of the sculptors of Gupta-Vākāṭaka, Pratīhāra, and Bhauma-Kar Period into flowing forms of incomparable beauty, surpassing the originals on all counts, the primordial models of the *vyālas* of classical Iran were excelled by the Mediæval masters of India.

The physiognomy of the *vyāla* and now the Indian one is implied, is unbelievably strange *Kirttimukha* or *grāsa* with different mythological basis notwithstanding, is manifestly the face of the *vyāla* in rendering. The *Śrījñāna-ratnakośa*, a hitherto unpublished post-Solaṅkī compilation from Gujarat, thus gives its description, accurate and detailed :[41]

> Gamanī gajaiipu sūkara-sy-āpi kaiṇau bhṛikuṭi kuṭilaḥ
> mārjāra-netrau mahisha-sya śṛiṅgau grāso kīrttimāna-yukto

The fundamental lion face with sinister brows, by grafting boar's ears, cat's eyes, and buffalo's horns mutates into *grāsa* that is *kīrttimukha* This description is equally applicable to the visage of the *vyāla* There is, however, a direct, graphical description of the *siṁha* alongwith that of *kīrtti* in the *Aparājitapṛichchhā* which applies to none else but *vyāla* It agrees in principle, if not in all details, with the preceding text in its injunctions:

> Bhṛikuṭi-kuṭil=āntra vārāha-karṇa mesha śṛiṅg=odbhavaṁ
> mṛiga-kapola simha-vaktraṁ kīrttiḥ syān-mukh=opamā-khyātā 2
> Bhṛikutiḥ syād baddha-karṇ=āśva-skandhaḥ kesarāvṛittaḥ
> krama-madhye par=āvṛitto hrasva-pādaḥ simhottamaḥ 3
>
> —*Aparājitapṛichchhā*, chapter 230.

Thus the face of *kīrtti* and hence that of the *vyāla* is a combination of the facial parts of a number of beasts. The basic face is once again that of a lion with a forehead of an antelope, ears of a boar and horns of a ram. The

shoulders should resemble those of a horse with leonine curve and feline feet. The *Śrījñānaratnakośa* in its description of *varālikā* recommends a basic face of a dog with horns of an ibex or a ram, neck of a horse and feet of a lion.[63]

This fundamental form apart, the walls of the mediaeval Indian temples teem with a number of specific varieties of *vyālas* conjured up by a skilful hypostasis and emphasis on a diagnostic facial feature of a chosen animal type. The five archetypal forms the lion (chemaera), the bird (griffin),[64] the horse (hyppogryph), ram, and ibex—known from Iranian sources were retained in principle in Indian versions A number of new mutants were evolved with characteristic features responding to the Indian environment That these whimsical types were by no means arbitrary nor conceived or chiselled unconsciously is, quite happily, clear from three different śilpaśāstras each of which expounds sixteen types of *vyālas*. The original verses from the *Samarāṅganasūtradhāra*, a Mālavīya work of the 2nd quarter of 11th century, the *Aparājitaprichchha* and the *Rūpamālā*, the latter a Ceylonese text yet unpublished and of unknown authorship and date,[65] maybe profitably quoted here for comparison.

Vyālah shoḍaśaḥ nirdrishṭā hariṇo gṛidhrakaḥ śukaḥ
kukkuṭaḥ simha śārdūla vṛik=ājā gaṇḍakī gajāh 27
Kroḍ=āśva-mahisha śvāno-markaṭa khara ityamī 28

—*Samarāṅgaṇa-sūtradhāra*, chapter 75.

Simhavyālam gajavyālam-aśvavyālam- narādikam
vrishavyālam meshavyālam śukavyālam cha saukaram 4
Māhisham mūshakavyālam kīṭavyālam cha vānaram
hamsa-kukkuṭa-māyūram tripalli-sarpavyālakam 5
Iti shodaśa-vyālāni uktāni mukhabhedataḥ
śarīram-ahi-vad-rūpam hasta-pāda-puchchh-ādikam 6
Vyālān-āntara-to rūpam-anek=ākārataḥ smṛitam 7

—*Aparājitapṛichchhā*, chapter 233

Kesarī hariṇī vyāghrī vārāhī śiśumāriṇī
matangī cha śikhī bhogī garuda-vajiā (?)
Bhalluka-mārjāra(?)[66] -tuṅgaḥ śākhāmṛiga virāṭikā
simh=ādi-varga ity=ādi bhāga shodaśam =eva cha

—*Rūpamālā*

No.	Samarāṅgaṇa-sūtradhāra	Aparājita-pṛichchhā	Rūpa-mālā	
1	Simha	Simha	Simha	
			Kesarī	Lion

No.	Samarāṅgaṇa-sūtradhāra	Aparājita-prichchhā	Rūpa-māla	
2	Śārdūla	...		Tiger
			Vyāghrī	Tigress
3	...	...	Bhalluka	Bear
4	Vṛika	...	...	Wolf
5	Śvāna	...	...	Dog
6	...	...	Mārjāra ?	Cat
7	Gaṇḍakī	...	Tuṅga	Rhino
8	Kroḍa	Sūkara		Boar
			Vārāhī	She-boar
9	...	Vṛisha	...	Bull
10	Mahisha	Mahisha	...	Buffalo
11	Gaja	Gaja		Elephant
			Mataṅgī	She-elephant
12	Aśva	Aśva		Horse
13	Khara	...	...	Donkey
14	Hariṇa	...		Deer
			Hariṇī	She-deer
15	Aja	...	...	Ibex
16	...	Mesha	...	Ram
17	...	Nara		Man (centaur)
			Kinnarī	Cherub
18	Markaṭa	Vānara	Śākhāmṛiga	Monkey
19	...	Mūshaka	...	Rat
20	..	Tripalli-sarpa		Tricephalous Snake
			Bhogī	Snake
21	...	...	Śiśumāriṇī	Porpoise
22	Gṛidhraka	...	...	Vulture
23	Śuka	Śuka	.	Parrakeet
24	Kukkuṭa	Kukkuṭa	..	Cock
25	...	Haṁsa	...	Gander
26	...	Mayūra	Śikhī	Peacock
27	.	...	Garuḍa-vajrā	Eagle ?
28	...	Kīṭa	...	Worm
29	...	...	Virāṭikā	?

The four types—Lion, Elephant, Boar and Monkey—occur in all the three texts.[illegible] For tiger, rhinoceros and deer, SS and RM agree. The buffalo, horse, parrakeet and cock are known in SS as well as AP. The snake and the

peacock forms are common to AP and RM. Each text, however, enlists certain types exclusive to its own. Thus the wolf, dog, donkey, ibex and vulture forms have been recommended only by SS. Similarly, the bull, ram, *nara*, gander and worm forms are mentioned in AP alone. In the same way, the bear, the cat (?), the porpoise and the eagle (?) are noted in RM only. The varieties being not the same in all the cases the final figure after compilation comes to not less than 28 for the distinct forms of *vyālas* ignoring albeit the female forms suggested by the Rūpamālā in lieu of male forms for the same propounded by other texts.

Most of these types are paralleled in actual examples They maybe identified by noting the facial alterations (*mukhabheda*) in particular Such forms as the elephant, bull, buffalo, monkey, deer, rhino, boar, dog and snake could come into being quite naturally in Indian ambience, from the life—domestic and wild—around the sculptor An early adumbration of a deer form is already seen at Sanchi [87] The tiger, bear and wolf followed the trails of the original lion form. The donkey came after the horse The gander, and the peacock, vulture and the eagle were included as an extention and amplification of the original bird form of the Iranian *vyāla* In these hyper-hybrid beasts the Indian sculptor has more than once succeeded in communicating the subtle, specific likeness of a particular animal for its *vyāla* form The ferocity of a tiger, the stupidity of a goat, the swagger of a cock, the surreptuous gait of a snake are deftly blended with the morphic built of the *vyāla* in its particular form And yet, equally often, it is found difficult to distinguish between a horse and a donkey type, a wolf and a dog type, a lion and a tiger form owing to overlapping nuances as well as high degree of stylization. Several forms encountered actually on the temples are altogether baffling, indefinable in their variations

Many were the regional schools of architecture in Mediæval India. They followed the mood, rhythm and the inborn generic force of a regional tradition. Just as the human and divine imagery of each particular art-province is typologically, ethnically, characteristically distinguishable, identifiable, so is the case with the *vyālas* of each region to an observant eye The *vyālas* from the tenth century temples in Gujarat, for instance, exhibit the vertical tensional movements with a coquettish ado. In Rajasthan as well these idioms with an accent on prodigy were closely followed In Central India, the *vyālas* on the temples of Gopādri school seem to have been overtaken by a sweet, dreamy indolence, a propensity shared almost completely by the Mālava-Medapāṭa instances owing to geographic propinquity. The *vyālas* on the Khajuraho temples,

however, betray dynamism in movements as at Pārśvanātha temple. By 11th century the lithe bodied *vyālas* as observed at Devī Jagadambī temple, are often attenuated, thrown almost into reptilian (*ahivat*) half-coils, and look for that matter, dragonish in cast. Ḍāhala instances such as those on the recesses of the three registers of Mārkaṇḍeśvara temple at Markandi are equally dynamic and perhaps more varied and handsome The *vyālas* on the Kaliṅga temples such as Rājarānī, Brahmeśvara and Liṅgarāja temple at Bhubaneshwar are composed, dignified and seem startlingly alive, a specific Kaliṅga trait not paralleled (except with a difference in early Pallava animal sculptures) anywhere else in India though patently present in Kambuja and Java where the influence of Kaliṅga prevailed in simbiosis with the one from Ṭondāi-maṇḍala. These racy Orissan *vyālas*, like a pat lion-cub stir an irresistible desire to fondle them, an instinct once again suggestive of a life-sap and loveliness infused in them by the sculptor. The *vyālas* on the temples of Pallava and early Chola Period are splendid examples of concentrated energy in a poise but ready to bounce when an opportunity comes. And that came later when they sprang to action whose manifestation and impact were too violent as gleaned in the Marraige Halls of Vijayanagara and early Nāyaka authorship The fantastic, monstrous mongrels are here exaggerated out of all proportions, almost jarring the senses That recalls the drama of magalomania enacted by the domination of the *grāsamukhas* on Javanese and Balenese Chaṇdīs

The *vyālas* in Western India are often accompanied by a kneeling knight engaged as though in an encounter. The knight is often thrown into inaction under the spell of terror cast by a roaring, balancing *vyāla* Such dramatic compositions are also known from Khajuraho In Orissa, *vyāla* is most frequently seen on an elephant mount Sometimes the *vyāla* even appears as though trampling an elephant (*gajakrānta*) In Orissa such forms are known, rather wrongly, as Gajavidāla Such Gaja-siṁha pair are known from Nalanda and Konarak answering perhaps the wellknown metaphors of Sanskrit poets but are not emblemetic of the iconic concepts of Gajavyāla Earlier, as at Alampur and Bhubaneshwar,[68] the *vyālas* are seen tamed or irked by a rider (often an amazon) to a flight. Normally, they are unbridled, autonomous, delimited only by the space they occupy

Siṁhavyāla figures prominently in *vāstuśāstras* This prominence is corresponded on the walls of the temples where they, alongwith Śārdūlavyālas, are more frequently on the scene Fig 1 represents an example from a vanished, tenth century temple near Mehsana in Northern Gujarat. This *vyāla* standing

on a *gajamuṇḍa* bracket is as strong as it is ornate. That from Nadol (Fig. 2) once adorning an early tenth century temple, is very spirited and truly leonine



Fig. 1
Siṁhavyāla from a temple near Mehsana.



Fig. 2
Siṁhavyāla from Nadol.



Fig 3
Śārdūlavyāla. Margasaheśvara temple, Viranchipuram.



Fig. 4
Śārdūlavyāla. Brahmpurīśvara temple, Pullamangai.

in action. Fig. 4 and 3 are examples of a Śārdulavyāla selected respectively from Brahmapurīśvara temple at Pullamangai and the Kalyāṇamaṇḍapa of Mārgasahe-



Fig 5
Mārjāravyāla. Kakanamaḍha temple, Suhania

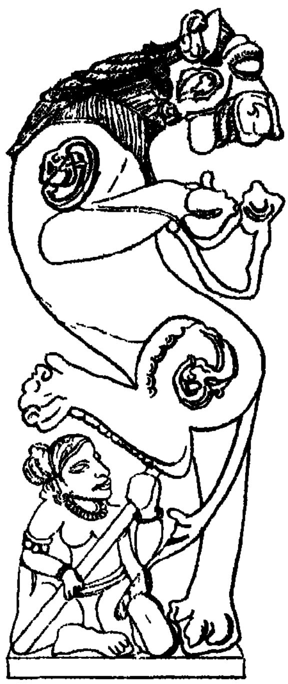


Fig 6
Vṛikavyāla Parśvanātha temple, Khajuraho



Fig 7
Vṛikavyāla Original from Lakshmaṇa temple, Khajuraho.



Fig. 8
Śvānavyāla. Kakanamaḍha, Suhania.



Fig. 9
Śvānavyāla. Viṭhobā temple, Vijayanagar.



Fig. 10
Śvānavyāla. Brahmeśvara temple, Bhuvaneśvara.



Fig. 11
Bhallukavyāla. Rājarāṇī temple, Bhuvaneśvara.

śvara temple at Viranchipuram. Both are invested with a power, almost elemental, a hallmark of the South Indian varieties. Fig. 5 is a rare example of Mārjāravyāla from Kakanamaḍha temple, Suhania.

Fig. 6 illustrates Vṛikavyāla from Pārśvanātha temple, Khajuraho; 7 was possibly on the capital of the pillar in the Clossed Hall of Lakshmaṇa temple there The hungry look of the wolf is quite apparent in the latter example. Fig. 11 is an example of a Bhallukavyāla from Rājārāṇī temple, Bhubaneshwar. It combines elegance with prowess, an ambivalence inherent in *vyālas* from Kaliṅga. Figs. 8, 9, and 10 show Śvānavyāla from Suhania, Kalyāṇamaṇḍapa of Viṭhobā temple, Vijayanagar and Brahmeśvara temple, Bhubaneshwar respectively The Suhania example has been sculpted with economy of line and a fairly realistic facial feature. The Vijayanagara *vyāla* is decorous as well as brutal in rendering. The Bhubaneshwar type is, as usual, delicate in treatment.

The six examples demonstrated in Figs. 12-17 are all of a Gajavyāla from different centres, each one of which reflects its provincial nuances Fig. 12



Fig 12
Gajavyāla. Pārśvanātha temple, Khajuraho

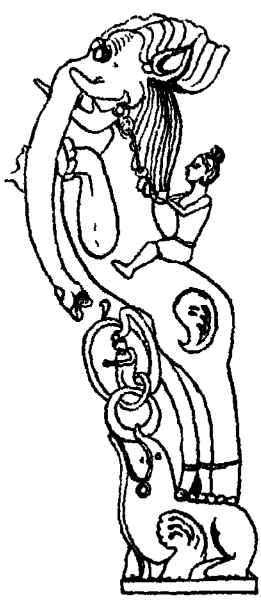


Fig. 14
Gajavyāla Marriage Pavilion, Vellore.



Fig. 15
Gajavyāla. Sun temple, Konarak.



Fig. 13
Gajavyāla. Munibāwā temple, near Than



Fig 16
Gajavyāla Darasuram temple, Tanjore



Fig. 17
Gajavyāla Lingrāja temple, Bhubaneshwar

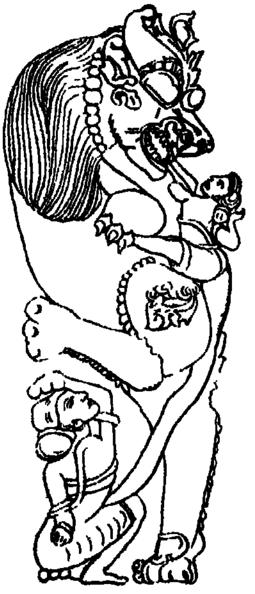


Fig. 19
Vṛishavyāla. Viśvanātha temple, Khajuraho.



Fig. 18
Ajavyāla. Doorframe, Shamalaji.



Fig 20
Meshavyāla. Vaital Deul, Bhubaneshwar.

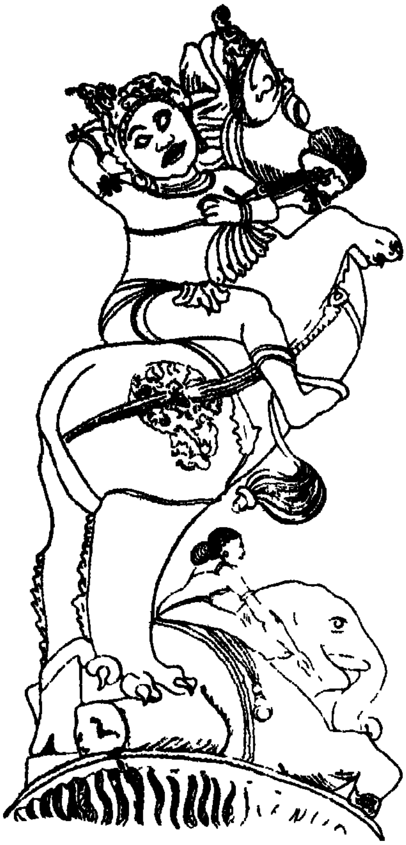


Fig. 21
Aśvavyāla Sun temple,
Konarak

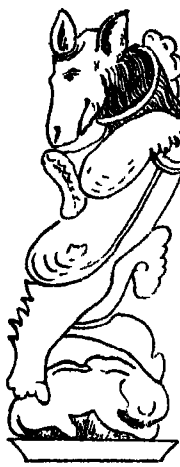


Fig 22
Aśvavyāla Sun temple,
Konarak

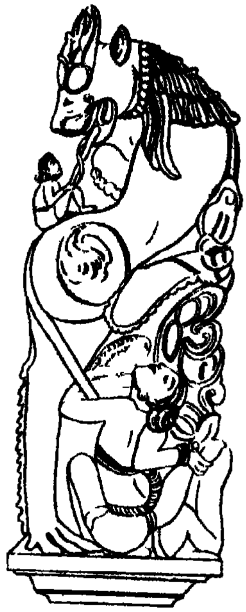


Fig 26
Gaṇḍakīvyāla.
Viśvanātha temple,
Khajuraho.



Fig. 24
Gaṇḍakīvyāla. Mahāvīra
temple, Ghanerav.



Fig 25
Gaṇḍakīvyāla. Sun
temple, Konarak.



Fig. 23
Kharavyāla Śiva
temple, Kotai.

is from Pārśvanātha temple, Khajuraho. The elephant 'look' is not stated with force, though in total volume, the *vyāla* has been forcefully delineated. Fig. 13 is from Munibāwā temple near Than in Saurashtra. It is ornate and vibrates with a tension. Figs. 17 and 15 are respectively from Liṅgarāja temple, Bhubaneshwar and Sun temple, Konarak. The soft, placid visage of an elephant dominates the smart vigour of the rest of the body. Fig. 16 is from Dārāsuram temple, Tanjore of the late 11th century. It is from a pillar base of the surrounding cloisters of the temple. It recapitulates of Pallava convention but in rendering it seems to put on a little barbaric, sinister mask. Fig 14 comes from a pillar of the Marriage Pavilion from Vellore. The trunk does not blend so naturally in this instance.

Fig 18 illustrates an example of an Ajavyāla from a fragment of a door-frame from Shamalaji. Ajavyāla is seldom seen in the context of mediæval temples. Fig 20 is its counterpart, the Meshavyāla; it is from Vaitāla Deul, Bhubaneshwar Meshavyāla is equally rare to encounter. Fig. 19 is a Vṛishavyāla from Viśvanātha temple, Khajuraho. Vṛishavyāla is not always easy to identify in actual examples

In Figs. 21-3 have been demonstrated two varieties, Aśvavyāla and Kharavyāla respectively Figs. 21 and 22 are examples of Aśvavyāla from Sun temple, Konarak The first is charged with action and ferocity, an unusual example of the Orissan school. The normal, serene type is represented by the second one. Fig 23 seems to be a Kharavyāla; it is from Śiva temple, Kotai.



Fig. 27
Sarpavyāla
Śiva temple, Ramgadh.

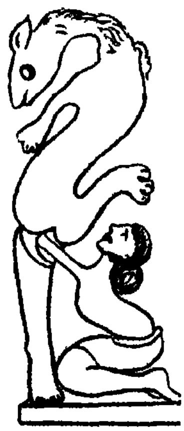


Fig. 28
Sarpavyāla, Jagadambī temple, Khajuraho.

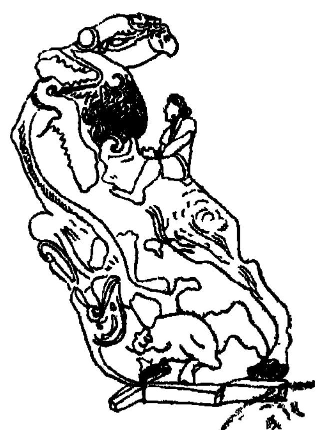


Fig. 29
Sarpavyāla. Varadarāja-svāmī temple, Kancī.

In Figs 24-26 have been shown three instances of what appears to be a Gaṇḍakīvyāla. Fig. 24 is from Mahāvīra temple, Ghanerav; 25 is from Sun temple, Konarak; while 26 has been shown after the one found on the Inner Sanctum of Viśvanātha temple at Khajuraho All of them swell with energy. The inflated nostrils of the Konarak example typify the animal more realistically.

Figs. 27-9 demonstrate examples of Sarpavyāla from three different sites. Fig. 27 is from Śiva temple, Ramgadh near Kota It lacks correct definition of form. Fig 28 is a more convincing example, it is from the first *jaṅghā* of Devī Jagadambī temple at Khajuraho The grotesque example seen under Fig. 29 is from the Marriage Pavilion of the Varadarājasvāmī temple at Kanchi and is rendered in the typical Vijayanagar style.



Fig. 30
Śiśumāravyāla. Mahāvīra temple, Ghanerav.



Fig 31
Śiśumāravyāla. Pārśvanātha temple, Khajuraho.



Fig 32
Naravyāla.
Sun temple, Konarak.

In Figs. 30-31 are selected two examples of what could be Śiśumāravyāla. The faces here are more mythical and show some affinities to the marine monsters. Fig. 30 is from Mahāvīra temple at Ghanerav. Fig 31 comes from Pārśvanātha temple, Khajuraho

Figs. 32-5 show examples of Naravyāla as well as *kinnarī* Fig. 32, quite distinctive, is from Sun temple Konarak. Fig. 33 is from Kalyāṇī temple, Ceylon and is of recent origin. Fig. 34 is from the sanctuary of Chidambaram.



Fig. 33
Kinnarī
Kalyānī temple, Ceylon



Fig 34
Kinnarī
Temple at Chidambaram.

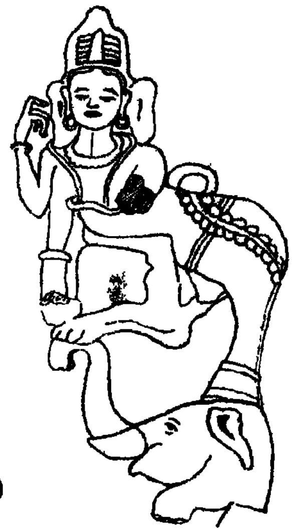


Fig 35
Kinnarī Navaraṅga,
Main temple, Ghanapur.

It looks archaistic but may not be older than the Middle Choḷa Period. Fig 35 is a *kinnarī* found as a strut above the bracket of a dwarf pillar of the *maṇḍapa* of the Main temple, Ghanapur in Andhrapradesh It dates from the Middle Kākātīya Period. Fanciful than attractive, it is a rare instance of its kind found as a substitute for a *nāyikā* figure

Bird forms are rather rare to meet in the context of the mediæval temples. Fig. 36 is perhaps a Gṛdhrakavyāla seen on the architrave of the celebrated Torana at Rewa. Fig 37 is a Śukavyāla from the lower register, south wall of Pārśvanātha temple, Khajuraho; while 38 has been chozen from the Kapilī (connecture) of the Śiva temple, Kotai.



Fig. 38
Śukavyāla. Śiva
temple, Kotai.



Fig. 37
Śukayāla. Pārśvanātha
temple, Khajuraho.



Fig. 36
Gṛidhrakavyāla.
Toraṇa, Rewa.



Fig. 39.
Indeterminable
Vyāla. Maṇḍapa,
Śrīrangam.



Fig. 40
Indeterminable
Vyāla. Mukteśvara temple, Bhubaneshwar.

In Figs. 39-40 have been shown two ambiguous, indefinable forms of *vyāla*. Fig. 39 is an extremely strange form of a *vyāla* from the Hall in a Nāyaka style at Srirangam. Fig. 40 is very like a horse, but the artificial grafting of an elephant's trunk places it in a category outside the known textual forms of *vyāla*. It is from Muktesvara temple.

The remaining forms of *vyālas* could not be identified with definism. At Khajuraho some of these could have been traced; but their location high up on the walls does not permit closer examination necessary for correct recognition.

The *vyālas* were ousted by the ascetic-figures during early 11th century in Western India as observed *a propos* of their history. By the end of 10th century as at Bhadeśvara temple in Anjar, with their ebbing energy and sagging, seal-like lethargic bodies, they are on a hastened march toward deterioration. At Khajuraho thanks to conditions of insularity at least in the domain of architecture,[69] *vyālas* not only persist, they maintain the verve and vigour even in the Dulhadeo temple of early 12th century. But since the Khajuraho school met an early end, the subsequent history of the *vyālas* in that style was never written. In the latter Ḍāhala temples the ascetic-figures replace *vyālas* as at Janjgir.[70] In Mālava temples also the ascetic-figures prevail. Two temples, which in their *bhūmija* style look like the cross between Medapāṭa and Mālava schools and which possess *vyālas*, are the Śiva temple at Ramgadh near Kota and Mahānaleśvara temple at Menal, both dating from the latter half of 11th century. Here, as well as at the Kinnarī-kī-putalīwālā-mandar near Bijolia, however, they do not conceal the grip of the progressive ossification to which they have been imperceptibly but inexorably subjected although they struggle to keep their form in tune with the iconic formulae. Two other temples, of mid 11th century and not essentially Mālavīya but still revealing powerful influences of Mālava school, the one being the Śiva temple (ca. 3rd quarter of 11th century) on Pavagadh in Gujarat, the second being the Triple Shrine (late 11th century) at Balsane in Khandesh, allow a few figures of *vyālas* which, however, have lost the subtle nuances of the examples from preceding century. In Kalinga, despite slow dissipation they are still resonant with vitality even after 11th century. At Konarak, for instance, the wall-faces of the terraces swarm with a variety of *vyālas* that are redolent of majesty and grace. Half a century hence they degenerated in Kalinga also into shoddy, even jejune forms as witnessed by the late 13th century temples at Bhubaneshwar and elsewhere in Puri District. After that epoch they rapidly retreat from the scene and are exceedingly rare to meet with in North India though they persist

in the South in stone as well as wood with amazing tenacity till the last century, albeit with the inflexions of the Nāyaka style. In North India with ever dwindling strength they fought the last battles for survival in localised centres in Rajasthan and Gujarat till 17th century. On these late temples, atrophied and abject, they are seen swaying, staggering and trying hard to adapt to the changing conditions. They remind us of the last days of the dinosaurs on our planet at the end of Cretaceous when these monsters were waging their final war before meeting the ineluctable fatum, the extinction. Their original significance, as well as purpose were by now forgotten. Their *primum mobile* was lost They look anachronic, depicted but as reflections of the past memories In Gujarat the stone carver ceased to portray them two centuries earlier than the wood carver whose conservatism dragged the degraded Simhavyāla and Gajavyāla, the only two mutants, till the middle of 19th century. Even so, the end at last came After a prolonged and colourful life of well over two millennia the *vyālas* finally disappeared from the ornamentations of the traditional Indian architecture.

Notes

1. Combaz, G *L'Inde et L'orient classique*, Vol. II, pp. 16-17.
2 *Ancient India* No. 4, p. 101.
3. Samarangana-sūtradhāra, 57/163 In the same chapter, in unnumbered verses, references such as rūpa-grāsa-varālakai, varāla-makarai=uktaṁ, ilikā makara grāsair=varālai, samakarair=grāsair=muktā-varālakaih, etc., occur. The Trishashtiśalākāpurusha (12th century) of Hemachandra and the Āchāradinakara (ca. A. D. 1412) of Vardhamāna sūri specify *varāla* as the mount of the Jain Yakshī Bhrikuti. In South India the current term is *yāli* and in Orissa, *biḍāla*, both these variants could have been derived from *vyāḍa* mentioned by later laxicographers and commentators.
4. So known in Orissa, *see* Bose, N.K. *Canons of Orissan Architecture*, p 105.
5. The Vāstu text Vṛikshārnava from Rajasthan refers to *vrālikā* in the context of Jain *parikara*. The Śrījñānaratnakośa gives the description of *varālikā*. In Gujarat the local sālāṭas call it *grāsaḍā* derived from *grāsa*, i.e. *kīrtimukha*. But the more frequent term used is *vyāla* itself in the Samarāngana sūtradhāra and Aparājitaprichchhā. The Amarakośa of the Gupta Period thus mentions *vyāla* Vyāla alagardo jalavyālaḥ samau rājila-duṇḍubhau. 1/5
Āśī-visho vishadharas=chakrī vyālaḥ sarisṛipah. 1/7
Bhedya-lingaḥ śathe vyālah puṁsi śvapāde sarpayoh. 3/186
Abhidhānachintāmani (mid 12th century) of Hemachandra also refers to it at three places. *See* verses 1216, 1222 & 1303.
6. Winged *vyālas* occur on the Toranas at Sanchi. They are also found as bracket-struts of the square pillars of the Caves of Kshatrapa Period near Dharagarh Darwaja at Junagadh. Three *vyāla* busts of late Kshatrapa Period and once adorning some reservoir have been preserved in Junagadh Museum.
7. Kramrisch, Stella *Hindu Temple*, Vol. II, p. 333.
8. On the seat-back of the well known Buddha from Sarnath, for instance.

9. On the seat-back of Buddha from the trio at Chaṇḍi Mendut (*See* Bernet Kempers A.J. *Ancient Indonesian Art*, plate 58).
10 Makuṭeśvara temple at Mahakuteswar.
11. For example, in the basement of Hoyasaleśvara temple, Halebid.
12. The rock-cut sanctuaries at Mahabalipuram such as the Varāha maṇḍapa and Pañcha Pāṇḍava maṇḍapa, Dharmarāja ratha and Gaṇeśa ratha possess pillars with *vyāla* base. Among structural temples, the Shore temple at Mahabalipuram, Kailāsanātha and other temples of Pallava Period at Kanchi, Tālgiriśvara at Panamalai etc, show *pādastambhas* with *vyāla* base. (*See* Srinivasan, K. R. *Ancient India* No. 14).
13. Harle, James C. *The Brahmapurīśvara at Pullamangai*, plates 11-12.
14 *See* Jambukeśvara temple, Frederic, Louis *Indian Temples and Sculpture*, Fig. 257.
15. Nawrath, Alfred *Immortal India*, Fig. 59
16. Cohn, William *Illustrations of Indian Art*, plate XXV.
17. A.R.A S.I. (1919-20), plate VII a.
18. *See* Shah U. P. "Sculptures from Sāmalājī and Roḍā (North Gujarat) in the Baroda Museum" (Bulletin, Museum and Picture Gallery, Baroda), Figs. 60-61 a
19 *Ibid*. plates 84-85.
20 For details *see* Dhaky M A. *The Chronology of the Solankī temples of Gujarat* (Journal of the Madhya Pradesh Itihas Parishad No. 3)
21. *See* Yazdani, G *The Early History of the Deccan*, plate XIX b.
22. *See* Goswami, A. and others *Designs from Orissa Temples*, Fig. 27.
23. Goswmi, A. *Orissan Sculpture and Architecture*, plate 5.
24 In Central and Western India this phenomenon had been of simultaneous occurrence In Kaliṅga, however, it happened a little later
25. At Lākheśvara temple (2nd quarter of 10th century) at Kerakot and at Trinereśvara temple near Than and Someśvara temple (late 10th century) at Nadol are observed *apsarasas* in lieu of *vyālas*.
26 Burgess, J. *Report on the Antiquities of Kāthiāwāḍ and Kachh*, plate LXIV.
27 The author is deeply indebted to Shri Krishna Deva Dy Director General of Archaeology in India, for this valuable information
28. Cousens, H. *Somanāth and other Mediaeval Temples of Kāthiāwāḍ*, plates LII-LV.
29 The author has been kindly supplied with this important information by Shri Amritlal Trivedi
30. The information has been very generously supplied by Shri Krishna Deva
3 *See* Dhaky M. A *op loc*. plate IX.
32. This is indicated by the fragments of temples from Mandal and Kadeshwari-ni-nal in Gujarat,
33. vārimārge munindrāṁ=stu pralināṁs=cha tapah-su cha—Aparājitaprichchhā.. 127/25
34. There were, of course, very few such instances. For the most part there were figures of ascetics.
35 The plates have been published in a Gujarati work, *Raṇakapuranī pañchatīrthī* by Ambala Premachand Shah.
36. There are two forms, Śārdūla and Gaja, on the Inner Sanctum of the Temple.
37. Zannas, Eliky and others *Khajuraho*, plates LXXXIV-V.
38 *Ibid*. plates CLVIII-CLX
39. Zimmer, H. *The Art of Indian Asia*, Vol. II plates 313.
40. *Khajuraho* (Directorate of Publicity, Madhyapradesh, Bhopal), plate 71.
41 Rambach *Pierre and De Golish*, VI told, plate 84.
42. Kramrish, Stella *op. loc*. plate III.

43. Tucci, Guseppe *Indian Sculpture in Bronze and Stone*, plate opp. Index.
44. Rowland, Benjamin *The Art and Architecture of India*, plate 107.
45. Anand, Mulk Raj and Kramrisch, Stella *Homage to Khajuraho*, plate 16.
46 The author owes this valuable information to Shri Krishna Deva.
47. Banërji, R. D. *The Haihayas of Tripuri and their Monuments*, plate XII.
48. The information is based on the photographs of this temple seen by the author at the Archaeological Survey of India, New-Delhi.
49. *Indian Archaeology—a review* (1959-60), plate LXXIII.
50 The author is under deep indebtedness of Shri Krishna Deva for this information.
51. *Annual Administrative Report of the Archaeological Department, Gwalior State* 1929, plates X-XI.
52. In Bengal style the recesses from the known temples have been left plain.
53 Ètienne, Gilbert *Inde Sacrée* Fig. 25
54 Mitra, Debala, *Four little known Khākharā Temples of Orissa*, Journal of the Asiatic Society, Vol. II, No. 1,1960, plate XIII.
55. Mitra, Debala *Bhubaneshwar*, plate XV.
56. *Homage to Kanarak*, Mārg, Vol XII No. 1, plate 13.
57. Bose N. K., *op, loc.* plate facing page 60.
58. Dhaky M. A. *op. loc* plate XIV.
59. Brown, Percy *Indian Architecture (Buddhist and Hindu)*, Fourth Edition, plate XCIII, Fig. 1
60. Burgess, James and Cousens H. *Architectural Antiquities of North Gujarat*, plates LVII and IX.
61. Sastri Hiranand *The Ruins of Dabhoi or Darbhavati in Baroda State*, Gaekwad's Archaeological Series, Memoir No III, plates XV, XVIII and XIX.
62. The author is deeply indebted to Shri Prabhashankar O. Sompura for permitting inclusion of these verses from the valuable manuscript of this work in his collection.
63. The relevant verse is unfortunately corrupt. In absence of other manuscript it could not be collated and hence not quoted here.
64. The form is also available in bronze as well as gold in Iran.
65. Gangoly, O. C. "*Lion on Elephant" motif in Orissan Art. The Orissa Historical Research Journal* Vol. IV, Nos. 1 & 2.
66. In practice only the former two are mostly found.
67. Cohn, W. *op. loc.* plate VII.
68. *See* citations 21 and 23
69. The tenth century temples in Khajuraho are close allies of contemporary Western Indian temples. From early 11th century, however, Western temples evolve rapidly on newer lines. At Khajuraho older idioms persist, they are only elaborated at a later stage.
70. Kramrisch, Stella *Hindu Temple* Vol. II, plates XL- XLI.